THE PLAIN VIEW

JULY 1947

The Impact of Rationalism on Politics — ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

Town and Country in English Life — H. J. BLACKHAM

Naturalistic Ethics — A. D. HOWELL SMITH

Puzzled People — H. L. BEALES

Two Great Problems — W. R. INGE, K.C.V.O.

Commentary and Book Reviews

QUARTERLY • ONE SHILLING

THE ETHICAL UNION

VOL 2
NO 2

THE PLAIN VIEW

A HUMANIST JOURNAL CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RELATIONS AND WITH THE QUALITY OF LIVING

Ονδεν ικανον ω ολιγον το ικανον —EPICURUS

Nothing is sufficient for him to whom what is sufficient seems little

UBERTATES ET COPIAE VIRTUTIS —CICERO

the productiveness and the resources of human quality

THIS IS THAT WHICH WILL INDEED DIGNIFY AND EXALT KNOWLEDGE, IF CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION MAY BE MORE NEARLY AND STRAITLY CONJOINED AND UNITED TOGETHER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN; A CONJUNCTION LIKE UNTO THAT OF THE TWO HIGHEST PLANETS, SATURN THE PLANET OF REST AND CONTEMPLATION, AND JUPITER, THE PLANET OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTION. —BACON

What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure

VOL. II. NO. 2 JULY, 1947

CONTENTS

		PAGE
COMMENTARY		3
THE IMPACT OF RATIONALISM ON POLITICS	ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON	10
TOWN AND COUNTRY IN ENGLISH LIFE	H. J. BLACKHAM	20
NATURALISTIC ETHICS	A. D. HOWELL SMITH	30
REVIEW ARTICLES:		
PUZZLED PEOPLE	H. L. BEALES	37
TWO GREAT PROBLEMS	W. R. INGE, K.C.V.O.	39
BOOK REVIEWS:		
THE STARS AND THE MIND	By MARTIN DAVIDSON	41
HEAD AND HAND IN ANCIENT GREECE	By BENJAMIN FARRINGTON	43
TRADE UNIONS IN THE NEW ERA	By BEN ROBERTS	46
TRADE UNIONS IN A LABOUR BRITAIN	By J. B. JEFFREYS	46
WORKS COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES		46
ARTIFICIAL HUMAN INSEMINATION	PUBLIC MORALITY COUNCIL	47
INTELLIGENCE AND FERTILITY	By SIR CYRIL BURT	49
THE HOWARD JOURNAL		50
THE ETHICS OF BELIEF	By W. K. CLIFFORD	51
CORRESPONDENCE		51

Edited by H. J. Blackham for The Ethical Union
4a, Inverness Place, Queensway, London, W.2

Subscription for one year 4/6 post free

COMMENTARY

A CHALLENGE TO HUMANISM. The report by *Mass Observation* of an inquiry into religious beliefs carried out in a London borough for the Ethical Union, and reviewed in later pages of this issue, is a challenge to Humanism. On the one side appears a mass of ignorance, bewilderment, indifference, and superstition. On the other side is the anxious and contentious bid for adherents by numerous sects, orthodox and unorthodox. Christianity is a missionary faith or nothing. If secular society rejects the social utility of that faith, the Church must still maintain that it is in the world not for the sake of the world but for the sake of the elect. Has Humanism or not a comparable mission? How should Humanists regard the results of this investigation?

Critics sometimes describe Humanism as a view of life with no comforting beliefs and no popular appeal; or they may say that Humanism has nothing of its own to offer, that in each generation humanists will be found popularizing the current scientific account of human life and hitching their wagon to a radical political programme of social progress. These are less than half-truths, and no less false. Humanism is not, it is true, a body of doctrine: it is a liberal temper, reasoned faith in the scientific and democratic methods and procedures, resistance to arbitrary authority in every field, concentration upon furthering the development of human interests and achieving their ideal harmony, by removing frustrations and multiplying means of fulfilment. It does not insist upon some finished view of what human life is for and what should be done with it. Because it does not step in and summon all to accept some such ready-made view, critics are ready to say that it is no help and no guide; and some humanists become anxious to supply the alleged lack. Humanists should not get rattled. If they form a competing sect with a developed world view, they destroy their own basis and their own programme.

For we have a programme. Humanists are concerned with everything that affects men's minds and interests, and concerned most with what affects them most: with religions and political programmes and social policies, with education, sciences, and arts, with radio, press, and film, with industry and the family. All these agencies, and many more, deeply engage and influence human lives. Humanism does not add itself to them in the field of religion as an alternative. Its concern with the fulfilment of human interests and their ideal harmony ranges it on all fronts. Humanists most certainly require an organization, a concerted policy and a grand strategy; they have to fight for their objects in many campaigns and

by means of many associations; they have to maintain an overall view of what is going on, what dangers threaten and what possibilities offer. All this clearly involves a definite point of view, definite assumptions and beliefs, definite commitments and repudiations; and humanists have to formulate explicitly and agree upon their standpoint and all that is involved in their approach. But certainty of our objects and our operations in the existing stage of development does not commit us to any final interpretation of human life. If people want a view of the world, there are humanist views which supply possible answers; and indeed it is an urgent and important function of Humanism to prepare and to encourage the production of adequate modern interpretations of the human situation and guides to living. But it is not the present mission of Humanists to supply a definite answer and to collect the adherents who will accept it. That is not the banner under which we march. Abstract philosophy, which is a serious attempt to answer ultimate questions, does not interest many and is not within their competence. Ideologies, which have a wide appeal, dramatize, generally speaking, historical situations, and organize a following to act on the faith of their belief in the reality of the dramatized situation. Humanists, too, are concerned with the existing historical situation and wish to influence it constructively; but by treating it in its complexity, acting on all fronts, seeking through all appropriate agencies to establish the conditions and multiply the means of natural fulfilments. Humanists, if they are consistent thinkers and experienced realists, must see that to reduce either the historical situation or the human situation to dramatic ideology is not to solve but to create a problem. It is the mission of humanism to save men from ideologies. Human life has too many uses, too many values, to be made wretched and hag-ridden by fanatics, enthusiasts, dogmatists, or doctrinaires. That, or nothing, is what humanists have always understood.

PATRIOTISM IS NOT ENOUGH. Psychologists (and others) have said some disenchanting things about love, not without effects upon practitioners, but the question whether or not it is worth while only interests survivors. Whatever is the source of the energies which sustain it, a sentiment and a passion for a nation not one's own (the landscape and the cities, the people, the culture, the history) is not uncommon and is closer to the love of a person than to disinterested study. The comparison is not bizarre. Such a love admits of and seeks requital: to be well received, to have one's own country loved, understood, adopted, idealized. Like other true love its course does not run smooth: it brings joy and moan, pangs and exultations, great hours and barren stretches; the beloved nation is often champion of a cause, bearer of an ideal, and supports the hopes attached

to that role no better than a great nation can; at best the pilgrim progresses, his faith is chastened and not lost. Such a love may be judged creditable, as philhellenism; or discreditable, as perhaps the love of the Germanophil yesterday and of the Russophil to-day; it may be a Byronic substitute for thwarted patriotism; or a second patriotism—as it used to be said, Everyone has two fatherlands his own and France. Like personal love it is complex; and often more than a little pathological, the unfriendly critic will think.

Nevertheless it is normal enough, and the sentiment for a country to which one is spontaneously attracted ought to be cultivated and given the chance to become an active passion. It is all very well to love humanity; it is not less desirable to love persons and peoples with some partiality—this side idolatry. To see from without and know intuitively from within, to hold in contemplation and to explore, to blend with the ideal themes of one's imaginative life the concrete being and historical movement of a great people, like mixing with a beloved person, is the essential human experience—from which we are too much separated by distractions and abstractions. If the teaching of languages in schools does not lead frequently to adventures of this sort, what other justification is there?

Nations vary characteristically in their approach to one another in cultural, political, and trade relations. It would be absurd to say that the French are masculine in such relations, and ourselves feminine, but peoples do collectively manifest differences of a comparable kind in their relations, and their citizens in their personal attachments individualize the national habit as well as their own disposition, temper, and temperament. The French gallicize, the English anthropologize their loves: a preposterous statement of course, but let it pass for something. At least we are talking about real attachments, genuine relations which embrace and move a person and make him manifest himself; not about the affectation of being an informed or travelled person, nor about mere ideological partizanship. The world needs this cross-fertilization of peoples. It is different from international relations taken as the problem of world peace. It has never been lacking. But the seed of it and the means of it can be largely multiplied. Let education lead to it and encourage it. Let holidays abroad be greatly facilitated and publicly encouraged. Let us be more partial and demonstrative in our public demeanour. In this field nothing is correct, everything is unique: it is the citizen's other love, legitimate or illegitimate; unless it comes to giving comfort to the enemy. There are, too, collective affinities served by common interests and policies, sometimes an elaborate interpenetration of cultural interests, a union not

merely federal. There was once an Anglo-French civilization. Perhaps there exists, or will exist, an Anglo-American civilization. With that suggestion our little innocent question of love gets involved with great questions of duty and interest, and raises the big phobias and passions which complicate public policy. We can choose, but it is not an entirely free and innocent choice as the world stands. At least we can make our passions and phobias look long and fairly into the face we love or hate. We ought to know what we are feeling about as well as what we are talking about. Let our enemies of Americanism, for example, test their antipathy by trying to make it survive a reading of the autobiography of William Allen White, Editor of the *Emporia Gazette*.

UNITED EUROPE. The United Europe Committee in this country and the Progressive Citizens of America, "an independent group with third-party possibilities," formed within a few weeks of each other, have nothing in common except a mixture of ingenuousness and disingenuousness which suggests the suspicion that active realists are using the names of prominent idealists as a stalking-horse to cover the approach to their real political objectives. Mr. Churchill is identified with the English group and Mr. Wallace with the American. The composition of both is highly respectable, their manifestoes readable and reasonable. The Progressive Citizens of America may indeed realize their third-party possibility, and "prevent the Republican Congress and the *laissez-faire* big business men from leading us down the high road of boom, bust, and war." There is reason to hope that they will. There have been Progressive tides in American history which have brought out the little boats from high beaches on to the ocean routes.

What are the prospects of the United Europe Committee? It is possible, although it is always difficult, to get nations to unite against a pressing common danger, or for the security and pursuit of common interests. General de Gaulle openly wished for an intimate union of the French and British empires, based upon access to the industry of the Ruhr and a Franco-British organization or hegemony of Europe with mutual support in the colonial fields. It is of such dreams that history is made. The inflammable imagination of Mr. Churchill, who is founder and chairman of the United Europe Committee, is not unlikely to have been fired by the same idea. If one really does want to preserve the tradition of European culture, the seamless robe of Christendom, the ascendancy of the middle class, or the British Empire, it is only in some such way that it can be done.

However, in these days of open diplomacy and popular politics a

policy which would deeply divide interests and sentiment in both countries is difficult to bring off and liable to reversal. A strong policy is quite disastrous if it is not unhesitatingly and persistently strong, if it does not mould and maintain with some promise of permanence the conditions upon which the new order and accommodation of interests will be based. Of course General de Gaulle's vision, or anything like it, is not the policy of the United Europe Committee. The Committee proposes the unification of Europe as a regional group under the Charter of the United Nations Organization. Those nations who formed the group would make regional arrangements for collective security, to which of course the Soviet Union would be invited to adhere. From the time of Versailles, and before, France worked doggedly to create a ring of French satellites round defeated Germany, and before the system disintegrated it was as French as the present system of Soviet satellites is Russian. Of course it was open to Germany to adhere to the treaties of mutual security which constituted the political framework of the system. Admittedly, it is intensely desirable to establish a rational system of mutual security which is nobody's system of political influence. We must not assume that it is impossible.

A Great Power in eclipse aspires to the moral leadership of the world, and in the councils of the nations appears obsessed by the idea of the advantage of the tail-less condition to mortal happiness. The doctrine is not convincing. That is why Field Marshal Smuts who repeatedly tells the world of his belief in the leadership of the British is confident that we shall again grow or acquire a tail. A European tail would be of great advantage.

The point to be made is that the proposal for a united Europe is not merely rational and entirely innocent. Suspicion of it is not frivolous. It may succeed only in widening the existing divisions, in so far as it is taken seriously and makes headway.

There is one possibility for the union of Europe which was suggested recently in the U.S.A., viz., that America should finance and aid reconstruction in Europe and in Russia on a great scale on condition that there shall be a genuine and effective system of collective security covering the whole region including the Soviet Union. Nothing less than an imaginative move of this sort will create the conditions of a possible union. Failing this we shall have to wait, with the not unreasonable hope that time is on the side of reasonable humanity. Assuming of course that we are not disposed, or are not able, to pursue a forceful policy of our own on the old model. But are we right in the present state of affairs to acquiesce in this assumption? Is self-deprecation really a suitable national signature tune? Does the Churchill-de Gaulle variation exhaust

the theme of world-wide Franco-British collaboration? We shall have very soon to raise and answer decisive questions of foreign policy. Meanwhile now is the time for frank widespread discussion of the alternatives.

THE HUMAN SPECTACLE. We know that we cannot love one another, save in the charitable sense. We think that we can respect each other. And so we can, if by respect we mean an habitual or cultivated indifference to those persons who are not intimately bound to us. To follow the public cues, behaving according to rights and duties, laws and regulations, customs and usages, dealing with people after their status and office or following the routine of the transaction, perhaps noticing prominent traits and tasting the vague flavour of personal impressions, but with no curiosity about the person, never peering into his life or guessing at his secret: in this sense it is possible to respect everybody, that is treat everyone in the same way as a fellow citizen and *prima facie* a decent man. But it is impossible to keep our personal estimates to mere respect unless we keep strictly within the bounds of these formal relations. This fundamental impersonal respect, deeper than politeness, is the precious ground of tolerable relations, securing to a person privacy, room to live, immunity from the insolent superiority or impertinent interest of others. Well-bred people and people of decent instincts accord it as a matter of course; and when it is violated its essential rightness and necessity are apparent. But it is less than human not to be curious about and to penetrate into the lives of others, and when we get behind the formal front face to face with a person living his life, it is not an impersonal respect that we feel, but pity, admiration, contempt, indignation, amusement, and the like.

This vulgar inquisitive dramatic humanity in us has a lot to be said for it, if it is responsible and intelligent. Unspoken slanders may not be injurious, but they are not fair. You cannot psychologize a person by casual intuitions (it is not only women who think you can) nor out of a book. The various schools of psychology supply plenty of labels, and they are invaluable clues, but none of them can be attached to any purpose to a living specimen: the observer who cannot do better than that should keep within the bounds of formal respect. There is a minimum of competence and good sense and good feeling which alone saves from intolerable vulgar stupidity and impertinence this approach to a close view of the person living his life, solving his problem, hiding his secret, compensating his deficiency, driven by his past, making his escape, persisting in his pattern of thinking, feeling, or striving; whatever the inside story may be—if there be a story. The decent alternatives

are to do the thing properly or not to attempt to do it at all. Mostly we do it crudely, relying on an impression formed of half-conscious perceptions and intuitions, undeveloped, uncriticized, and unchecked. The principles of scientific method apply to the decencies of ordinary intercourse, if it goes beyond the modesty of formal respect. Conscience is weak in this private world of thoughts and guesses. Formal respect, which cannot be superseded by any insight we may gain into the person, itself requires that this insight shall be legitimately inferred from dependable evidence and held as provisionally true: a pedantic way of saying that we should see what is really there and go on looking. This veracity and delicacy in forming impressions of other persons is probably not rare.

It is not helped, however, by our comfortable blanket judgments of men and conduct. The modern psychological approach, it is said, has destroyed tragedy as a literary value. The same intellectual and social changes have destroyed charity as a form of ethical judgment. The conditions of a new intensity and seriousness in personal relations and judgments are fast being developed. New knowledge and new social ideals have laid these foundations. No doubt an adequate moral philosophy is needed to etch the design. Even so, personal practice comes first, and we are individually quite capable of the special effort which is needed to establish on a new model high standards of perceptive sensibility and moral helpfulness in personal intercourse. The human spectacle, when it is not a vicious literary indulgence, is the best philosophical view of the world and pulse-taking estimate of contemporary life which each can get at first hand for himself. The point of philosophy, however, is to enable us to see the world in order to change it.

THE IMPACT OF RATIONALISM ON POLITICS

IN dealing with the relation of Rationalism to politics we are dealing with a relation between two very different things. Rationalism and politics have little in common with each other except the basic fact that both are modes of human behaviour.

Politics are affairs of State. A State is an organisation of human beings which, in most cases, arose long before any of its living members were born and to which they belong by reason of having been born into it. The British State, to which we belong, arose more than two hundred years ago through the union of two much older States, the kingdoms of England and Scotland, the origins of which go back to the Dark Ages. Thus a State, as a rule, is not a product of thought or design. It is a product of the hand-to-mouth activities of many generations of people, none of whom intended or foresaw the kind of thing that has resulted from their efforts. As Engels puts it, "what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed."[1] Now history is past politics, and politics are present history. Politics are the continuation in the present of the processes which formed States in the past. Both past and present politics have as their constant feature a struggle for power between opposing interests, involving a certain amount of force, a certain amount of fraud, a certain amount of moral idealism, and a certain amount of humbug and self-deception.

There are many definitions of Rationalism. I am going to offer one of my own. A Rationalist, I suggest, is somebody who hates to be made a fool of. Suppose you or I had been a traveller in the romantic Middle Ages to which defenders of the faith bid us look back as a time of jollity and good fellowship, and suppose a robber knight had met us and relieved us of our worldly goods. That would have been just too bad; but if there was no help for it, we might have taken it like philosophers. But suppose not a knight, but a holy man had met us and told us that if we parted with our worldly goods to him, he would say masses to get our souls out of the torment of purgatory, in which we might otherwise linger for some thousands of years. As it was a superstitious age, we might have believed him and given him our worldly goods. Now suppose that later something led us to doubt the veracity of that holy man. I think we should have been far angrier with the holy man who took our goods by fraud than with the robber knight who took them by force. Both of them injured us; but the holy man added insult to injury: he made fools of us. That, I suggest, is the origin of

[1] *Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, Engels to Bloch, Sept. 21, 1890.

Rationalism. When men discover that those who pretend to be wiser and better than they, and who claim payment for the service they render, are really no wiser and no better and render them no service, they feel they have been made fools of, and the result is to engender that general refusal to accept unverifiable statements which goes by the name of Rationalism.

Now Rationalism cannot be confined to theology. Just as many dogmatic statements are made in politics as in theology; and if we find that they are false, our reaction is much the same. When I was a boy, Victoria was still on the throne. Everybody spoke of her with immense reverence and assumed that she was very good and very wise. We know now that she was a woman of narrow views and small intelligence, mean over money, as violently prejudiced in politics as her grandfather, George III, and pliable as putty in the hands of a fulsome and adroit flatterer like Disraeli. This example illustrates the part played in politics by myth. There is no reason to believe it smaller now than then. Those organisations of men and women which we call States are, to a greater extent than we are usually willing to admit, directed and guided by dint of making fools of the men and women who compose them. The Rationalist who studies politics will bear this fact in mind and try, so far as he is able, not to be made a fool of.

But the Rationalist who is interested in politics must beware of one pitfall. The average man is not a Rationalist. He is often made a fool of and seldom finds it out. Too many Rationalists are led by this fact into an unsocial contempt for the human race. Such contempt gets us nowhere. We Rationalists are men and women of like passions with the majority. We may be quicker-witted than they: or we may merely have had the luck to read the right book at the right time. We are not necessarily kinder, braver, or better than they. If we are to get anywhere in politics, if we are to help to build a more rational world—a world in which fewer people are made fools of than now—we must learn to suffer fools gladly, not to ask the impossible, and to work with those with whom we disagree, if they and we have aims in common and if by co-operation for those aims the cause of a more rational world can be advanced. We must not wash our hands of the world because we cannot have perfection.

The impact of Rationalism on politics means the reaction of people, who intensely dislike being made fools of, to a process in which one set of people are continually making fools of another set of people, taking advantage of them, and exploiting them. The Rationalist has to live in this world. His first reaction to it is to ask how such a state of things came about. It is a reasonable reaction;

for if we know how a thing happens, we have a better chance of being able to change it than if we neglect that enquiry. The Rationalist attitude to social phenomena has undergone three phases, marked by three types of political theory. They are, firstly, the theory of the social contract, secondly, the utilitarian theory, and thirdly, the materialist or Marxist theory. Each of these theories has arisen from Rationalist reflection on a particular phase of social evolution. Each has its followers to-day. I hope to show that political differences among Rationalists to-day are due largely to the persistence of attitudes inherited from the past—attitudes which served a useful purpose in the circumstances of the age in which they arose, but which are not relevant to the changed conditions of the present day.

When Rationalists began to reflect on politics, they were struck by a certain duality in the nature of the State. Obviously some kind of State was necessary: civilised life would be impossible without it. But existing States exhibited an extraordinary number of features which did not seem to be necessary at all. Why, for example, should one man, the King, be singled out from the rest, treated as a sacred person, surrounded with state, invested with prerogatives, and allowed a revenue far in excess of the needs of any ordinary human being? Why should the priests of a particular religion be treated as State dignitaries and given power to silence their rivals and critics? Why should a particular class of men, in return for services rendered to the King by their ancestors, be endowed with land and allowed to live in idleness on the labour of other men? In short, were a King, a Church, and an aristocracy really necessary? The theory of the social contract was an attempt to answer this question. Its origins go back to antiquity. Epicurus, the greatest of ancient Rationalists, taught that justice consisted in an agreement to abstain from mutual injury, that the terms of the agreement varied from time to time and from place to place, and that they admitted of alteration according to changing circumstances. It would follow from this that the only necessary political institutions are those needed to prevent mutual injury, and that privileges enjoyed in excess of that need are parasitic. The Epicureans, however, do not explicitly draw this conclusion. We may perhaps read some such criticism between the lines in those passages of Lucretius where the poet dwells on the vanity of political ambition and attributes it to an irrational fear of poverty and death.[1] To have said more might have been indiscreet. The question came to the fore again in seventeenth century England, when Hobbes, the first great modern materialist, tried to prove that all the features of the contemporary State—absolute monarchy, a State Church, and

[1]Lucretius III, 59-86; V, 1113-1135.

the rest of them—were necessary if there was to be any civilised life at all. For unless there is to be a war of all against all, men require "a common Power to keep them all in awe;" and that power must be absolute, for resistance spells general anarchy. Hobbes was speedily refuted by the English Revolution, which proved that it was possible to resist a monarch without plunging into a war of all against all. The question what features of the State were really necessary remained unanswered. Locke thought that the object of the State was to protect life and property. Rousseau agreed, but added the pregnant corollary that "no citizen should be rich enough to be able to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself."[1] We might argue the matter for ever on these lines without result, for the simple reason that the State is not, as these men thought, a deliberate creation, and not being a deliberate creation, cannot strictly be said to have any object, except such objects as we succeed in putting into it. There is no social contract; and the criteria invoked to unravel its terms are purely subjective.

Nevertheless the theory of the social contract marked a real advance in political thinking. It killed the so-called right of conquest and the divine right of kings, and it prepared the way for the utilitarians. What Rousseau, with all his wearisome verbiage about a social pact, was trying to say was this. Men cannot be expected to obey a government unless they think that they get more by obedience than they would get by disobedience. A State, therefore, to be stable must consult the interest of its subjects. The State is made for men and women, not men and women for the State. This was better expressed by another great eighteenth century writer, Helvétius, who held that men were machines actuated by their interests, and that to render them virtuous or public-spirited society must be so organised as to make private and public interest coincide. From Helvétius Bentham derived his principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, to which I shall come later.

The eighteenth century thinkers represented the first impact in theory of Rationalism on politics. The French Revolution was its first impact in practice. Essentially the French Revolution was the refusal of the middle classes and peasants of France to be fleeced any longer by clergy and nobles who had ceased to be even competent rulers and who had brought the country to bankruptcy. The leaders of the Revolution were almost all Rationalists of one sort or another—mostly deists, with a few atheists. Deism, gradually passing into materialism, was in the eighteenth century the normal philosophy of men who refused to be fooled by the pretensions of the Catholic Church. The Declaration of the Rights of Man

[1] *Contrat social*, II, xi.

adopted by the French National Assembly astonishes us to-day by its moderation. It insists on liberty in the sense of "the power to do whatever does not injure another," on equality before the law, on security of the person, on freedom of speech and publication, on taxation according to means, and on the sanctity of property. It might almost pass to-day as a Conservative manifesto. But it would be a mistake to infer from this that Conservatives to-day are the sole guardians of the rights of man, or that the Declaration was not a revolutionary document in its time. It was drawn up in an age in which peasant farming and domestic industry were still the rule, in which the factory system was in its babyhood, in which the divine right of kings still had defenders, and in which religious toleration was a new idea. The limited company, the trust and the combine, the syndicated press were yet undreamt of; if any of the authors of the Declaration had dreamt of them, he would have voted the dream a nightmare. To the Rationalists of that day it seemed that if only every man were equal before the law and free to do what did not injure his neighbour, to think as he liked, to speak as he liked, and to write as he liked, all would be well with the world.

The difficulties of the Rationalist in politics are due to the fact that, as I began by pointing out, the State is not a product of reason, but of a process in which opposing interests, each right in their own eyes, struggle against each other for power. The history of the French Revolution foreshadows in miniature the drama which has been enacted on a larger stage in the subsequent history of the world, and on which the curtain has not yet fallen. The story has become familiar. The classes in possession—in this instance the court, clergy, and nobles—put up a fight for their privileges, call in foreign powers, and bring on a war of intervention. A war of intervention, supported by a formidable fifth column within the country, inevitably begets a "reign of terror." *Cet animal est très méchant-quand on l'attaque, il se défend.* Moreover, it soon appears that you do not solve all social problems by proclaiming men equal before the law and letting things rip. On the contrary, by so doing you bring to the surface the opposing interests of capital and labour which have rent European society ever since. Are the rights of property absolute, or are they limited by the interest of the majority? What use is equality before the law to a man who must sell himself in the labour market in order to live? These questions were first raised during the French Revolution, and divided then, as they have divided ever since, those who are satisfied with political democracy from those who demand its extension into the social and economic sphere. But in the French Revolution these questions played only a secondary part. It was not these questions which

led to the Terror. It is a vulgar error to suppose that the Terrorists used the guillotine to force an equalitarian Utopia on their countrymen. They used it to destroy a fifth column at a time of war and invasion. Some of them lost their heads and did evil things. Are we sure that in their place we should not have done the same? It was easy to say "No" forty years ago. It is not so easy to-day.

I have dwelt somewhat on the French Revolution because it illustrates not only the impact of Rationalism on politics, but the resistance to that impact. It is significant that the foremost literary assailant of the Revolution in this country was Edmund Burke and its foremost defender Thomas Paine. Burke was an exuberant and excitable Irishman with a Catholic mother, a Catholic sister, and a Catholic wife. He is one of the masters of the English language, but one of the greatest anti-Rationalists of all time. That famous passage in which he says that "the age of chivalry is gone, that of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever," and goes on ranting about "honour which felt a stain like a wound" and "under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness," tells us nothing, when all is said and done, except that Burke finds a knight in shining armour a more picturesque figure than a French *philosophe*. It is an expression of feeling, not of reason. Take note of it; for it shows that men of the greatest gifts may be so swayed by personal associations and class interest that they close their minds to reason and see in its exercise a danger and disaster to society. Burke's deliberate anti-Rationalism points forward to Newman, to Nietzsche, to the philosophy of "blood and soil," and to the Catholic Fascism which threatens our century with destruction.

As the nineteenth century advanced, those questions of capital and labour, of the rights of property, and of the exact meaning of freedom and equality, which were first raised in the French Revolution, gradually became dominant. The economic basis of the world was transformed. The factory system drove domestic industry to the wall. The local market gave place to the world market. Underconsumption in one continent led to under-employment in another. Mankind was becoming economically interdependent. Yet the old rights of property in land and capital, the old conceptions of national sovereignty, and the old religious establishments with their pre-scientific and other-worldly outlook continued to dominate men's lives and thoughts. The way in which men thought about the world had become irrelevant to the way in which they made their living in it. That is still our trouble to-day.

Rationalists had to decide their attitude to all that. On the question of religion this was easy. Since the eighteenth century no

thinking man had been fooled by the fairy-tales of priests—I say deliberately, no thinking man; for of course millions had never been taught to think, and thousands who had been taught to think refused to do so. But on the question of politics a decision was less easy. The prevalent Rationalist philosophy of a hundred years ago was the utilitarianism of Bentham and his followers, derived ultimately from Helvétius. According to this view man's sole motives are the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The excess of pleasure over pain is happiness; and the only criterion of private or public morality is the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. By attaching rewards to moral and penalties to immoral behaviour, private and public interest can be made to coincide. Bentham recognises the existence of social motives like sympathy and goodwill; but we are not to reckon on them: "the only interests which a man is at all times sure to find adequate motives for consulting are his own." Each man is the best judge of his own interest; and provided he is restrained from directly injuring others, the best policy, according to the earlier utilitarians, is to leave him free to seek his own happiness in his own way. The greatest happiness of the greatest number will therefore be ensured by a policy of *laissez faire, laissez aller.*

But it did not work out like that. While the utilitarian theory was being developed, the economic conditions which had first suggested it were rapidly passing away. In a country of peasant farms and domestic industries it had been arguable that the best government was that which governed least. But in the world of cotton mills and coal mines which had now leapt into life the workers took to forming unions to raise wages and limit hours and to demanding State interference with industrial conditions. Every country to which the factory system spread became the arena of a new class struggle between the industrial capitalists and the underfed and precariously employed proletariat.

The utilitarians were slow to do justice to the Labour movement. They were remote from the struggle: their work lay in London; and the theatre of war was not London, but the new industrial areas of Lancashire, Yorkshire, the Midlands, and South Wales. The condition of the people might be bad; but a plausible explanation of that had been provided by Malthus, and although its author was no Rationalist, was and is accepted by many Rationalists. In order to combat the theories of the French Revolution Malthus put forward the view that while population tends to increase in geometrical progression, the means of subsistence can increase only in arithmetical progression, and that the disparity between the two, unless corrected by moral restraint, will make a happy society for

ever impossible. It does not seem to have occurred to Malthus that from the beginning of history the labour of man has sufficed not only to maintain and perpetuate his species, but in addition to support important classes of people who produce nothing at all, not the least notable being the clerical profession to which Malthus himself belonged. Such classes could not have come into being if mankind throughout history had been waging an unequal battle for bare subsistence. The theory assumes that the ratios of increase of population and food are constants which can be known *a priori,* whereas each plainly depends on many variable factors. It is a matter for ironical reflection that the one positive outcome of Malthusian theory has been the invention of contraceptives—an invention of enormous benefit to mankind, but one which would have filled the reverend economist with holy horror.

That great Rationalist, John Stuart Mill, deserves credit as the first of the utilitarian school to take the new Labour movement seriously. He saw that the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number justified a much larger measure of interference with economic forces than his predecessors had been willing to allow, and he saw it with increasing clearness as he grew older. He even went so far as to envisage the eventual emergence of a Socialist society. In one passage he recognises the large part played by class interest in shaping conventional morality and therefore in retarding changes which are in the interest of the majority. But except for this passing glimpse, Mill does not seem to have faced up to the enormous mass of interested opposition which was destined during his lifetime and still more after his death to deaden the impact of Rationalism on politics. When we read him, we feel inclined to parody old Holbach and to exclaim: "Since Mill has spoken, why is not the universe convinced?" Why, in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, when so many men of intellect and influence have seen and spread the light of reason, has organised society nevertheless followed the beaten path of unreason even to the edge of the abyss?

To answer this question it was necessary to go a step further than Mill and to apply scientific method to the examination of the origin and history of the social order itself. This was the task undertaken by Marx and Engels. I have not space to deal in any detail with Marxism: that would need an article to itself. But there are a few things which must be said. Many people make a great deal of the fact that Marx was a Jew. Marxism, it is suggested, is only Jewish apocalyptic thinly disguised in nineteenth century dress, and not a Rationalist theory at all. This is ignorant nonsense. True, Marx was a Jew by descent, but he was not brought up as a Jew.

His father was a typical eighteenth century Freethinker and cared so little for Judaism that, when his son Karl was six years old, he was baptised with all his family in order to enable them to follow any career they might choose under the Prussian Government. Marx is a legitimate successor of the great French materialists of the eighteenth century. He gained his doctor's degree by an essay on the philosophy of Epicurus, the great materialist of antiquity. His materialist philosophy, together with early experience as a Radical journalist and editor, led him to the conclusion that Rationalism could achieve victory only through the solution of the social problem, since as long as the social problem remained unsolved, people would seek an "opium"—an imaginary solution in an illusory "other world." Solution of the social problem can come only through the victory of the working class in the struggle actually going on.

Critics of Marx, especially those who do not read him, credit him with the doctrine that all wealth is due to labour and that therefore to the labourer all wealth is due. He never said this, and he dealt very severely with Proudhon, who said something very like it. Marx does not argue about what is "due." He argues about society as it is and the way it is going. He is impressed with the fact that the capitalists, after doing wonders for which he gives them full credit—discovering and colonising America, opening up India and China, bringing in steam, machinery, and railways to supply the expanding world-market, importing raw materials from the ends of the earth, and exporting products to every quarter of the globe—are no longer able to control the forces they have evoked. This is even more grimly true to-day than it was when Marx first made his diagnosis a hundred years ago.

In such a world—the world as science, industry, and commerce have made it—the task of Rationalists is to a great extent the criticism of old catchwords which have changed their meaning, but which continue to be used as if the meaning were unchanged. Liberty, for example, is one thing when it means the freedom of the peasant or the craftsman to work for himself and exchange his products for those of other craftsmen or peasants without paying toll to a feudal superior. It is quite another thing when it means the freedom of a financial syndicate to control the natural resources of a country without interference by the people of that country. Freedom of publication is one thing when it means the liberty of John Milton or John Wilkes to expose some royal racket or priestly pretensions. It is quite another thing when it means the liberty of a millionaire to buy up a chain of newspapers and hire anonymous writers to present with venal unanimity that picture of events (and

no other than that) which it is to his interest to put across. Property is one thing when it means the interest of the little man in his house and holding. It is quite another thing when it means the interest of absentee landlords in their rents or of absentee investors in oil or rubber on the other side of the globe. When politicians and newspapers use words like "liberty," "property," and "democracy," as if nothing had happened since the days of Milton and Wilkes, of Rousseau and Jefferson, to alter their meaning, they are fooling us. They are using a façade of words to invest the shady ramps and backstairs intrigues of the present day with the honoured associations of past battles for freedom.

The utilitarian test of the greatest happiness of the greatest number has more to be said for it as a slogan, provided we remember certain things. Happiness is an abstraction—a general term for having or getting what you want. We cannot measure happiness. But we can measure food calories. house-room, infant mortality, literacy, expectation of life, and things like that. We all want food, houses, health, education, and so on. If the utilitarian test means the diffusion of these goods among as many human beings as possible, well and good. But let us make no mistake. Not everybody accepts that test. The Catholic Church, the most influential people in other churches, and a certain number of intellectuals with nothing better to do, denounce that test as materialistic; and that denunciation is echoed by all those to whom more food, more houses, healthier children, and better education for the many mean less power and profit for themselves. The utilitarian test has to be translated into action; and action means hard fighting.

We Rationalists are heirs to a great tradition. To borrow the words of an old Christian writer, "we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses"—those who in every age have refused to be fooled by impostors who took tribute of mankind for nothing. We shall best continue their work if we avoid illusion on the one hand and arrogance on the other—if we neither expect all men to be rational nor despise them because they are not. The way forward to a more sensible world is not by preaching and scolding, but by studying the actual movement of society and by co-operating with those elements which we judge to be hopeful and creative, even if they are imperfect, against those survivals of the past which threaten to destroy them and us with them.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

TOWN AND COUNTRY IN ENGLISH LIFE

A Two-Way Flight

TOWN-BRED and country-bred make a division of mankind old enough and real enough to survive many distinctions more prominent in history. Our necessary modern deprecation of the consolidated historical distinctions of race, nation, faith, sex, and social class, like the aggressiveness turned inwards of primitive conscience, is liable to excessive function: it threatens to paralyze the springs of culture. All the more precious is this ancient and innocent distinction, as necessary to human culture as the distinction of sex to the economy of nature. For centuries treated facetiously, a staple theme on the ligher side of literature, it is now treated religiously by those who propose the worship of biological values for the salvation of personal values threatened by masses and machines. Even the behaviour of more ordinary people shows that the natural fascination both of the city and of the countryside is turning morbid. Quite a few middle-class people have given up their jobs in town and made a bid for getting a living from the land. How many more who dare not follow them can't stop playing with the idea? For these the countryside means more than a national playground, a change of scene, a place of exercise and jolly pursuits: it promises a recovery of manhood, the answer to secret miseries and self-contempt. There is a great urban public for books on farm life: they take a conspicuous place in the bookshop window displays. On the other hand, some third of the population in the villages have got away to the towns. How many more long to follow, and wait for the opportunity? Is this an interesting case of selection by environment? There is a more obvious conclusion: that neither in the towns nor in the country is modern life found satisfactory.

The Forgotten Order

Great estates were liquidated with the feudal system, and by the 18th century great estates had again been acquired and consolidated. Of course this was not merely the result of the enclosures for the progress of agriculture stimulated by the growth of towns and manufactures. It was a perverse development, perpetuating the aristocratic system of family inheritance and the anachronistic conception of land as status, the necessary attribute of a person of influence. Adam Smith describes the economic consequences, with Gibbon's comprehensiveness, penetration, vigour, and bite. He was impatient for a modern approach to farming on business lines, anathema to our modern devotees of the Natural Order, but (as he saw) far more productive, and closer to the needs of trade and industry and to the national interest. The social value of land destroyed its economic

value for agricultural development: it came reluctantly into the market and sold dear. Only those capitalists went in for farming to whom it promised personal happiness worth the sacrifices it demanded. Capitalists who had made their fortune in trade or industry might in a spirited and experimental way lay out money on agricultural land, and get returns. Outstanding landowners were leading an agricultural revolution in their improvements of farming methods and livestock breeding. Nevertheless, as Adam Smith observes, the great landlord is not an improver of land; he is neither a capitalist nor a countryman; he wastes his capital and insulates himself from the country: "he embellishes, perhaps, four or five hundred acres in the neighbourhood of his house, at ten times the expense which the land is worth after all his improvements." The squalid judgments of Adam Smith have since had their day and are now out of fashion; which is not pure gain.

At least the system of land-owning gave town-bred people a footing in the country, kept the polite world turning sedately on the poles of town and country through the cycle of the year. However, the shift was a change of scene not a change of life. Steele's prescriptions in the *Spectator* for living together in a country house read like prescriptions for seeing the company companionably through a stay on a desert island. Elsewhere in the pages of the *Spectator* the smell of woods and meadows comes through as a joke, like smells of less respectable origin. The polite world had a great theme in Nature, looked at through the spectacles of literature or by the rules of fashionable aesthetics. The country lily is gorgeously painted seen from the lawns and windows of the insulated country house. Yet, then as ever, the orthodox bent the knee to the pious opinion that country life is best, most innocent, most natural, most healthy. Then as ever genuine country life was a matter of temperament and developed sentiment and taste. Rusticated clerics if they were town wits like Robert Herrick or Sydney Smith have eaten out their hearts for the company they missed; if they were naturalists like happy Gilbert White, a neglected corner of an obscure shire has sufficed for the world.

Of course the romantic revival when it came did not restore the naturalness to nature; it put new literary values into the scene. There have been cults of the peasant and the yeoman, of scenery and places; country exile has engendered the morbidly gothic and the mordantly sordid; town segregation, the romantic dream and sophisticated patronage: all the literary evidence leads one to suspect that what the country lacks is fresh air. The literature of our own day does little to remove the suspicion, but we can look at contemporary things with our own eyes and recognize that in sentiment

as in economics conditions are to-day favourable, probably never more favourable, to easy, familiar, and equal intercourse between town and country, the pedestrian intercourse of a happy marriage. That is fortunate, for town and country, agriculture and manufactures, are married and have to keep house together whether or not they see eye to eye and walk hand in hand.

Regional Planning

The break-up of the old town and country pattern and the new principles of town and country planning designed to check and redress the worst developments of the past are familiar topics canvassed long enough in public discussion to have established certain ideals. We are now in the stage of publishing detailed local surveys and preparing a definitive national policy. There cannot be too much informed public concern about that policy, for it will contribute largely to the quality of our civilization and the satisfactoriness of our lives. Four of the persistent ideas which have been influencing thought in recent years and have established accepted ideals are these: regionalism, the interlacing of town and country, the satellite town or village, the community unit.

Regionalism is in one sense a geographer's conception, and in another sense a literary and cultural movement. In connexion with the planning movement of our day it has had the powerful advocacy of Lewis Mumford who has poured into it a wealth of idealism. The region is the sphere of operations within which the modern achievement of consolidation, conservation, and development will take the place of yesterday's expansion and exploitation. It is the "theatre for human activity," "a collective work of art." The functional interdependence of elements in the regional complex redresses the old subordination to a metropolitan centre. According to this conception, you don't live in a town nor in the country, you inhabit a region. The ideal region has everything: metropolitan culture, diversity of agriculture and of industry, recreational amenities, forest, mountain, and sea coast. Ideally, all this is fully and freely used and imaginatively possessed by the inhabitants, who embody in themselves and their institutions and productions a recognizable regional culture. In a small country like England the idea has no rigorous application. But its insistence on decentralization, on articulate relations and the economic distribution of social resources, above all, its imaginative stimulus and orientation of the spirit have made it an influence which was much needed and has done much good.

The interlacing of town and country is the bringing of the garden into the house, the fields into the town, spreading the town over the

face of the land, making the garden city wherever there is population. In Utopian extravagances of earlier days there was a thought of ironing out the difference between town and country, creating a bowery arcadia from end to end of the land. Nowadays the limits of the theme are clearly discerned, and it is a principal purpose to keep towns and villages compact, with a clean edge to the surrounding countryside, to fill in and build up existing centres and to prevent the location of houses or factories in the open countryside.

The satellite town proper is designed to check the expansion of the great centres, and enables the authorities to cry woe on those who lay house to house until there be no room. It lies within easy communication of the metropolis, but it is not a dormitory; it has its own industrial zone and is interdependent with the surrounding countryside, and dependent upon the great centre only for metropolitan services. It is a necessary conception, for it re-establishes amenity and rational conditions of living, with easy access to the special resources concentrated in the city. The principle applies regionally: the county town offers its special services to lesser towns and villages within, say, a radius of twenty-five miles; the country town to the villages within, say, seven miles; and the local village centres to the agricultural hamlets and small villages.

Of course population in a region is not neatly dispersed and aggregated in a symmetrical pattern of functional interdependence on this model. Nor is it official policy to re-map the regions on this model. Regional planning is not as close to the drawing-board as town planning. Detailed study of actual habits and existing functions has itself suggested the rational plan of regional economy. Initiation lies with industrialists and local authorities, with individuals and associations and communities; but the regional boards on which the various ministries are represented are there to inform and to co-ordinate, ultimately to veto and to permit, the social changes which are proposed. Their advice and their decisions are based upon detailed expert local studies and applied national policies. As time goes on their guiding hand will be seen. It will be seen to serve the common interest better than the unseen hand of Adam Smith's economy.

Agriculture

The unseen hand of that economy brought about appalling urban congestion and rural depopulation. Between the outbreak of the first world war and that of the second nearly half a million left the land and more than seven million acres lapsed from cultivation. So long as industrial employment was good and imported foodstuffs plentiful and cheap, employment on the land was uneconomic and farming did not count for much in the national interest. Those con-

ditions have gone, probably for ever. Soil erosion and the development of secondary industries in the primary producing countries, the rise in nutritional standards all over the world, and our own weaker export position will make home agriculture permanently important to Britain. In the history of British farming there have been two great periods lasting four or five generations, but never has the land been more productive than it is to-day; and with less men. Even under the stress of need for maximum production, the Government's battle for output programme does not propose to put back on the land half the number that has left since 1914. It is not enough, and we don't know what the optimum number is; but we do know that the productivity of agricultural labour is increasing and promises to increase. Examples of good farming there have always been, but to-day farming is being up-graded all over the country. And it is attracting new blood. Farmers have responded to the situation and have organized themselves efficiently, not merely to put themselves into a strong bargaining position, but also to improve their standards and practice. We are still living in emergency conditions: we don't yet know what it will be possible to buy and to sell abroad. Farmers still have to be told to grow crops which they don't want to grow and ought not to have to grow, for which their land is not specially suitable. In time it should be possible to use the Farm Survey of 290,600 holdings in England and Wales, carried out under the War Agricultural Executive Committees, for a rationalization of farming on a national scale, a genuine agricultural economy in which the holdings will be efficient units efficiently equipped and concentrating on the production for which they are best fitted. Meanwhile, scientific research, agricultural education and organization, and national policy have generated a ferment in farming which matches the stir that is going on throughout the country on other fronts, for example in education.

Rural Industries

Many rural industries are in a strong position and are not likely to decline: those, for example, which are engaged in processing agricultural products, such as breweries, creameries, tanneries, or sugar beet, bacon, and canning factories; and those which are engaged in producing for the farmer machinery, fertilizers, and the like. Such industries when they are sited in country towns, as they conveniently may be and frequently are, provide a diversity of stable alternative employment for the rural population. So does work in the extractive industries. In most of these industries the future promises better than the past. They shared the depression of agriculture and will share its prosperity. Country brickyards and sugar beet factories are, on new methods, likely to offer continuous instead

of seasonal employment. And to existing rural industries of this kind in the country towns suitable light industries of another kind are being added; brush-making would be a fair example.

It is the self-sufficient village community which has been disrupted, and the interdependent village craftsmen who have been displaced: blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carpenters, saddlers, thatchers. Their number has been reduced, but the survivors are still indispensable. The Rural Industries Bureau, under the Ministry of Agriculture, was set up to look after them, not to maintain their romantic survival, but for the sake of their indispensable part in rural economy. They are enabled to purchase equipment and to get training and technical advice. Whether as survivors they are the fittest, it is impossible to say; but it is probable that with modern equipment they are more efficient than their fathers, and they are certainly better adapted to what is wanted now. Most of them are conscious individualists and many develop enterprising sidelines and show the characteristics of small capitalists of the pre-industrial period, woefully striving to go their own way. Some of these crafts, notably the wheelwright's, were once great and are destined to vanish. Regret them one must; but they go after a vanished order, and the new order has its dignities and greatness too. As for the employment they once sustained, there is still employment in the country, greater in diversity and in volume, for there is greater mobility.

Rural Standards

It is in the villages, especially the small villages and hamlets, that the rural problem is seen conspicuously, as the urban problem is conspicuous in the slums. To the poor all things are poor; and to small populations, housing, education, administration, public services and health services, transport, sport, recreation, cultural and social facilities, are all poor. The self-help which might compensate for the lack of public provision is crippled by the loss of traditional leadership: the landowner has gone; the Union of Benefices Measure has withdrawn the parson from the smaller parishes; the Hadow reorganization has withdrawn the schoolmaster. The enfeeblement of the smaller communities is completed by the migration of the more vigorous and the younger elements, who go to the towns to enjoy increasingly attractive amenities and opportunities. Equal citizenship demands that at all costs the rural citizen shall not be socially poorer than the townsman. Stronger than justice, the national need to keep men on the land also demands the satisfaction of the rural worker and his family.

Probably within the next decade the great majority of people living in rural England will be provided with decent houses, a piped water supply, electricity, and, last and perhaps least, sewerage. Exchequer grants under the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Act, 1944, are expected, on the evidence of the working of the earlier Act of 1934, to enable local authorities to supply the remaining thirty per cent. of rural districts without assuming too great a burden. Paper schemes already exist for most districts. The National Union of Farmers since the war negotiated a scheme with the supply companies to electrify 150,000 farms in five years, which would equip about seventy-five per cent of holdings. That indicates the measure of the problem and the time it will take to solve it. Rural housing was making progress before the war, and a sound policy had been worked out. The main principle was to expand in the first place by reconditioning and filling in, which it was estimated would allow an expansion of about fifty per cent. Of course the present programme in the villages shows conspicuously the shortage of men and materials, but it is sad to see the complete disregard of accepted principles. It is exceptional to see houses in building which are not strung out on the outskirts of the villages along the approach roads. In some cases these houses are being put up by speculative builders and advertised to outside purchasers, whilst nothing has been done to meet the needs of young married villagers. The Rural District Councils in many cases are not doing their duty; and the machinery which has been set up to help and stimulate them has no power to compel them.

Rural Education

The villages may expect, then, to be provided soon with public services which have seemed for so long to be prohibitively uneconomic. There remain other needs which make problems of a different kind: alternative stable employment, educational opportunity, health services, shopping facilities, entertainment, administrative offices; and, in another group, social and cultural activities; and the neighbourliness, citizenship, and local patriotism and pride of place which in the country are particularly important. Few villages are too small to provide the rationed goods of weekly shopping; and most are within easy reach of a country town which will offer shopping, entertainment, and administrative services equal to ordinary regular needs. A small town of from two to three thousand will suffice for that. The real difficulty in the villages is schooling.

In some cases the number of children is too few and there is no school. In other cases some twenty children of different ages are taught by one teacher in one room through all the phases of the

primary stage. This may not be bad. It would seem to be better if such cases were assimilated to the first and the children sent to another village. The difficulty is aggravated when the attempt is made under the new Education Act to concentrate children for the secondary stage of their education. On the assumption that more than fifty per cent. will be selected for a Modern school course, schools of this type can be provided in the larger villages and will serve their immediate neighbours. But the other two streams (grammar and technical) for secondary courses from these villages would have to be directed elsewhere, sent to the nearest town. The position does not largely differ from that created by the Hadow reorganization, which concentrated children in the larger villages for the senior phase of their elementary education. But the Education Act intends to make a difference: the three streams, each taking a different secondary school course, are to be educated together on a footing of social equality. This important principle of the Act is expressed in the multi-lateral school where the three types of secondary education are given under one roof. If village children can all go to the same centre for the secondary stage of their education, it serves better the purpose of the Act. Assuming that the adequate staffing and equipment of a grammar school requires a minimum of 300 pupils, and that twenty per cent. of the children of eleven are selected for a grammar school course, and that one-sixtieth of the population is in each year group, there would need to be a population of 18,000 to feed one co-educational grammar school. The town itself need not be so large, since it would draw upon the villages in the surrounding countryside within its sphere of influence, say within a radius of seven miles: the effective population of a country town is the population of the catchment area which it serves. Thus a country town of from six to ten thousand inhabitants might serve as a centre for secondary education. Such a centre would also offer a considerable volume, and perhaps diversity, of employment, and decent shopping and entertainment. It would seem to be constructive policy, and feasible, to encourage the location of suitable industry in small country towns so that the great majority of villages were put within easy reach of such centres.

Country people have had a comparatively poor deal in education. Apart from inadequate buildings and staffing, the system has not suited their interests. It is often said that country teachers have helped to depopulate the villages by teaching the children to despise farm work and encouraging them to go to the towns where they could get on. In so far as this is true, it is a reflection of bad conditions in the farming industry; the schools would help to drain labour in the same way from any industry or area suffering from

bad conditions. But the urban bias has been even more influential and inescapable in the national system of education than in the teachers: the elementary school met the requirements of the secondary school, in its turn governed by the requirements of the university. The mass of the field who also ran and failed to win places were turned out of the training establishments after years of intensive training fitted by habit and inclination mainly for the lower grades of clerical service. A vast change for the better has now been made possible. Agricultural wages have been brought up to the national level, urban standards are being brought to the villages; and the Education Act has released non-academic schools from the tyranny of the scholastic syllabus and the university examination. The Modern school in the country can be given a rural bias and made the foundation of a liberal education for country life, which of course is not at all the same thing as technical education for agriculture. It might not be wise to give the Modern secondary course a rural bias in all country schools. There might be a distinction in this respect between the Modern school located in the country towns along with grammar and technical schools, and those established in local village centres. There is scope for experiment, and there must be compromise and adaptation to local conditions. It will take a generation and more to get the first fruits of the Education Act. The point to be recognized is that national economic, social, and educational policies have created a rural policy with a content of exciting possibilities, which can mobilize and employ all the initiative and energy rural England affords.

Social and cultural activities, like neighbourliness and local character, do not directly depend upon number. Here the small places come into their own and have often a great deal more to show than the country towns. That seems to be the experience of the Rural Community Councils, whose job it is to stimulate and assist community activities and public spirit in the parishes. What is done, however, depends upon local leadership; and that nowadays is a matter of chance rather than the duty of the squire, the parson, and the schoolmaster. But there are compensating movements on foot, and publicity and easy intercourse will bring home to all villages what is going on and what can be done. If every hamlet and small village finds itself within very easy reach of a large village organized as a local centre on the lines of the Village Colleges of Cambridgeshire, everybody in the countryside will have not merely very good cultural and social opportunities, but such opportunities offered as a means of enlarging and fertilizing (and also compensating) the special interests and pleasures of life in the country.

The country gentleman is a figure of some interest and importance in the pages of Dr. G. M. Trevelyan's *English Social History*. The book concludes with a lament for the country life destroyed, the local traditions obliterated: "with the coming of motor transport, the intrusion of urban life upon the rural parts became a flood, turning all England into a suburb." Disturbance of the equilibrium between town and country, and the consequent destruction of the character of both with the submergence of depersonalized man in mass society is a commonplace of social analysis. Suburbia rather than the industrial slum is the recognized diagnostic of the disease. The application of industrial machines and methods to the land is regarded by some as the last fatal step in this direction, the wilful end of man's career of reckless exploitation. Actually, it is the first and necessary step in the direction of redressing the balance, as all should see. The face of the countryside has changed many times during the course of our history: from swamp and forest to mark and manor and open fields, and in recent times to the park land, meadows, and lanes of our domestic shires. It is natural to want to preserve the intimately lovely face of the countryside as we have it now; and the vile squalor of our towns makes any threat to it an occasion of panic. Probably the rationalization of agriculture which is necessary to our livelihood will not grievously alter the character of the countryside. But it is useless to think of the country as a field of escape, an ancient continuing alternative to the nightmare of modern industrialism. Town and country are variations on a common theme. The problem in both is the same: to subordinate the machine to human uses; to give to the masses genuine vocation, standards, human scope and practicability of purpose. The science, engineering, and business management which go into modern farming exact great qualities. The small communities of the countryside and country towns are still integrated, and when they have the social equipment afforded by modern resources they will, in the best instances, offer a model of sane, many-sided, masterly and pleasant living. Those who live and work on farms and in villages will have easy intercourse with people in towns, and speak the same language, inhabit the same world, share and use the resources of the same region. Instead of being a reservoir of vigorous raw labour for the towns, the countryside is going to attract men and women second to none, and the country towns their share of industry. The country is not an annexe of the town, nor a different civilization, but an equal partner in creating a common civilization, possibly healthier and more humanly satisfying and "natural" than anything history can show us. There is very far to go yet, but there should be less doubt than there is about the direc-

tion and the route. Suitable country towns, for example, really must get their share of new industry, not merely the smallest crumbs which may find their way there by accident. There is evidence of a lack of confidence in a vigorous policy of rural development. The amount of new industry in the development areas has recently been recognized as alarmingly small; and the lack of priority for this aspect of rural development postpones indefinitely the expansion of country towns. The close interdependence of factors in development makes this prospect a matter for serious consideration: how necessary, how important, for the hopes bound up with rural development, is the building up of country towns? Let the public, using the published planning surveys, and published research on industrial location, study the question and form a body of opinion. A widespread movement of reasoned opinion could be influential both in forming the initiative of industrialists and in making public policy. Modern theory does not propose to leave the future to the unseen hand which gave us the present. It is possible to be so pleased with new theory that old practice goes on unnoticed. The limitations of planning in this field, which should be recognized, make it almost helpless unless there is widespread, active, informed opinion generating initiatives. The present outline is tracing a most promising design. What is done in the next fifty years to complete or to spoil it will not be a chapter of small significance in our history.

H. J. BLACKHAM

NATURALISTIC ETHICS

WHAT is the substance of morality? And what are its sanctions? These two questions should be carefully distinguished. That morality is of vital importance to us all is the common ground of Humanist and Supernaturalist. A radical questioning of ethics has been an occasional feature of both the ancient and the modern worlds. In the last century Friedrich Nietzsche, whose lyrical iconoclasms or travesties of them have inspired, though they have not wholly determined, the Nazi and the Fascist ideologies, tried to view every system of ethics from a standpoint "beyond good and evil," and violently denounced as the fruit of mental and physical degeneracy many moral values that civilized mankind, not only Christendom, has long taken for granted. Yet though his imagined "Over-man" (*Ubermensch*) was to be creator of the values that would shape his larger and fuller life, irresponsible to God or to lesser human breeds, Nietzsche did not believe that the majority of men could dispense with traditionary ethical disciplines and even found a place for specific Christian virtues in his sociological speculations.

Man without morality is not man. Morality, the roots of which are pre-human, consists of the modes under which human societies integrate their life. The Benthamite Utilitarians absurdly equated moral choice with conscious calculation of pleasures and pains in the sequel. Good and bad were thought to be weighed in mental scales. Is the quantity of agreeable feeling in A greater than in B? The implicit assumption was that he who adjusted the scales and applied the weights was a well-bred Englishman, unconcerned with whatever queer mental balancings might affect the inhabitants of less favoured countries than his own. J. S. Mill's modification of Benthamism, by making the greatest happiness of the greatest number the criterion of good conduct, logically brought Utilitarian into the camp of Intuitionist ethics. A Benthamite might retort to Mill that his own happiness was quite compatible with less happiness for the majority, and Mill could only protest that such a conception was personally degrading. Nevertheless, Mill was justified, on utilitarian principles, in regarding morality as meaningless without its social conditioning. When Robert Ingersoll pithily declared that "the time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here, and the way to be happy is to make others so," he was voicing a simple but profound truth. A subtler and deeper thinker than Robert Ingersoll, Felix Adler, the founder of the Ethical Movement, gave ethics a mystical lead with his doctrine of "the spiritual manifold," a growing world of interpenetrating personalities, who are eternally engaged in its creation.

Psychology of the Benthamite epoch had not begun to explore the sub-conscious. Our conduct, we now know, is largely determined by pre-rational urges. The Psycho-analysts appear to have shewn that inhibitions, formed under severe social pressure, sublimate and disguise crude animal propensities in all sorts of ways, and that very little of what we hate or love, of what we are inclined to do or not to do, is the fruit of conscious thought; when we fancy we are acting reasonably we are often only rationalizing what our heredity or our infantile environment has made imperative. Nevertheless, criticism of conduct and standards of conduct does count in the long run. If reasoning were nothing but rationalization one might well despair of the progress of mankind.

Ethics and Natural Selection

Ethical values are at war, and here, as elsewhere in the cosmos, natural selection is continually operative. The appeal to conscience to decide which of two courses of action is right or wrong ignores the fact that many consciences have sanctioned what many other

consciences have condemned. The feeling of obligation may attach itself to every kind of misconduct, and good men have yielded to virtuous promptings with a guilty heart. As the individual is always socially determined in his inner life no less than in his outward behaviour, his moral values will be largely those of other individuals in the environment to which both he and they belong. But there is always the factor of variation, of resistance to a given norm, and in the case of certain variants, who express what large numbers dimly feel, this factor may change the norm. The worst tend to be eliminated, since they have little or no sense of obligation. Ishmaels can only disintegrate the social group, and, if we take a large perspective, nature has no use for Ishmaels. As bodily organisms the best members of society may perish at the hands of their fellows, in one way or another, but they often undergo a spiritual resurrection. What they stand for may increasingly count, though the triumph of greatness is always marred by the little men's ignorance and selfishness, for the little men outnumber the great men by many millions.

All systems of ethics root in fundamental animal impulses. The species *Homo sapiens* has the same right to exist as other species; it cannot defend this right by any method of argument nor is it able to dispute it. The voluntary suicide of a species is impossible. True, the individual may desire to die; but all deathward thoughts are either pathological or else indicate that the relinquishment of life appears the only alternative to life on intolerable conditions, and most conditions of life will be found tolerable by a vigorous organism. Ethics teaches us how to live, not how to die. There is nothing in the history of religion that really disproves this statement. Preparation for death in the faiths that make immortality a dogma of primary importance is preparation for further life in an alleged superterrestrial world. Buddhism may be cited as a religion that denies the value of life and propounds a closely articulated ethic as its open sesame to annihilation. But primitive Buddhism, as nearly all experts are agreed, was concerned with the attainment of the complete mastery of self through the recognition of its evanescent character, and of a state of poise in which the battering storm of lust and passion could be contemplated as something alien. The Arhat gained a deep joy of living in seeking to detach himself from enslavement to subconscious urges. "Very happily we live, free from hate among the hating." The sense of the vanity of all things evokes a paean of triumph. What happened to the Arhat after death the Buddha pronounced an insoluble enigma, and the earliest Buddhists do not seem to have cared. The subtleties of later Buddhist thought, blending meta-physics with mythology, turned Nirvana into the self-identification of the saint with the

Absolute, or else into a mystical attitude to the phenomenal world. The quest was now for the divinization of man.

The Paradox of Morality

The paradox of morality lies in the fact that the very lusts on which it is necessarily built threatens its destruction. We cannot get away from the earthly. Food and sleep and sex are primary needs. Special tasks and special times may demand their renunciation. But the struggles of the ascetic to escape the animal within him too often convert the animal into the devil. Human life is life in a community. Robinson Crusoe was not the isolated unit we are apt to think him. England of the seventeenth century followed him into his tropical island. We are social or consciously anti-social creatures even in our dreams. Pre-communal man is a myth.

The students of savage life tell us that those at the bottom of the human hierarchy are often more decent and more kindly in their relations with their fellows than savages living in larger and more complicated societies. As for the cruelties of the savage, the horrors of modern civilization, especially under the conditions of war, should make us seriously doubt our superiority to him in this respect. It is true that the ethics of many primitive communities does not govern their dealings with aliens. In the eyes of the savage he who is not a member of the tribe is as the beast of the jungle, though we must remember that a friendlier attitude may often exist. The progress of civilization entails the continual enlargement of the ethical area. The evil of Nazism lies in its deliberate efforts, scientifically and diabolically planned, to arrest and reverse this progress.

As Schopenhauer argued, sympathy is the basis of ethics. It is in the relations of man and woman, primarily in those of mother and child, that sympathy arises. Sex is not sympathy. Lustful possession often goes with brutal selfishness. But maternity involves a measure of sympathy. Those who interest us tend to evoke our joy or sorrow about what they do or feel. Such emotions are found in varying degrees among many sub-human species. Proximity kindles the spark of sympathy into a flame, which is usually intermittent, provided latent antagonisms do not reveal themselves in virtue of the daily and enforced contact.

To be moved by sympathy is not the same thing as to accede to claims for recognition or alleviation, since the most monstrous egoist must often, in his own interests, do as he would be done by.

Sympathy at its culminating point is love or charity—the "agape" of the noble rhetoric of 1 Cor. xiii. Charity, of which mercy is a negative aspect, is often represented as opposed to justice. But

charity is simply a more sensitive justice—a justice advancing beyond rules and precedents; a justice that is sceptical of all crude divisions between friends and foes; a justice that looks hopefully to the future and is discerning of the soul of goodness even in things evil.

Sceptics—often merely sceptical *poseurs*—have asked why we should do what is right. Such never ask why we should be selfish or cruel. It is assumed that egoism of all shades is so natural to the human animal that, so long as the will to live is not extinguished, vitality will carry egoism with it. But surely altruism is also natural —in some measure to nearly everybody, and to the saint, the artist of the moral world, in abundant measure. No religion or philosophy can provide a radically bad man with motives to right-doing; all that is possible, in such a case, is to fetter wickedness with fear, and thereby render the lot of normal decent men more tolerable.

The Appeal to Theism

What do we gain by appealing to Theism for ethical sanctions? "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The good man may be attracted by the idea of God, when God is presented to him as the full flower of the goodness that is beginning to bud in his own imperfect heart. But he will love God because he loves goodness. And why should he cease to love goodness if he discovers that it is not enthroned in heaven, but can only be cultivated, often with bleeding hands and tears, on an earth that alike threatens and encourages the coming of the reign of ideal justice? It may be said that, if all men are looked on as the objects of divine care and the possible heirs of the kingdom of heaven, we shall be better able to serve them, despite their follies and their sins. But one must put over against this thought the fear, nay, the terrible assurance, that Christian and Muslim Theists, most of them at any rate, have entertained—the assurance that the majority of human beings are destined for a fate far worse than death. Is the belief that sin will never end, that for millions pain will never find assuagement, less intolerable than the belief that virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, love and hatred will at last perish from one of a myriad worlds in one of many million island universes, whose potentialities are far from exhausted, and perhaps inexhaustible, and where beings superior to our poor little species may yet arise?

The fact is that reflections on the destiny of mankind do not really disturb the current of our lives. Most of us are happy, as a rule, if the temporal or eternal well-being of ourselves and our friends seem reasonably assured; and if we are modestly effective in

enlarging our own little circles of useful toil and good-will, the idea of a last judgment or a holocaust of worlds casts too faint a shadow to darken our ethical horizon or chill our hearts.

While the idea of God, at its best, can do no more than give morality a sublime poetic setting, Theism often betrays a tendency to confuse and pervert ethics. Does anybody really believe, as Alexander Pope professed to do, that all discord is "harmony not understood?" Yet the logical Theist must hold that, though the creature disobeys the commands of the Creator at his peril, his disobedience and the punishment it entails are integral to the cosmic pattern which God is weaving on the loom of eternity, virtue and joy, sin and pain alike enhancing God's glory and—monstrous paradox!—fulfilling his love. If one denies this one implicitly confesses that the divine will must suffer a lesser or greater measure of frustration.

No one has a right to deny categorically the presence of helpers in the unseen who are deeply concerned with man's ethical and cultural development. Nor does it seem possible to escape the idea of a basic unity, a noumenon that sustains the ever changing phenomenal order. But this unity is the surd of existence and can be conceived in terms neither of body nor of mind. "It is high as heaven: what canst thou do? deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know?" (Job xi, 87).

The Conflict of Good and Evil

The conflict of good and evil, however, is only intelligible against the background of the amoral. Those who will not take this viewpoint are apt to regard the ferocity of tigers as the fruit of original sin, earthquakes as punitive agents, and the very stars as awful warnings or models of unswerving fidelity. Even Buddhism, for all its godlessness (in the strictest sense), has not been able to avoid this ancient bias, for it makes ethical action exhaustive, instead of merely illustrative, of the universal law of *karma,* and so makes nature behave theistically without a Theos.

The agnostic, non-theist, or atheist—whatever we choose to call him—holds that ethics must free itself from theological guidance to avoid confusion and frustration; but he does not doubt that theistic sanctions often impart vitality and glow to moral conduct. Faith even in so strange a providence as the negro Father Divine has made men better by making them happier. "Truth embodied in a tale" may succeed where argument fails. Yet motives of human reciprocity generally sway us, whatever our creeds. Out of the rough-and-tumble of daily life arise the promptings to the good and the dissuasions from the bad.

If we do not need Theism to furnish us with motives for the moral life, can it avail us any better than Humanism to discover the contents of ethics? Theistic ethics are generally atavistic. Creeds and sacred books of long ago, or enactments issued by anathematizing priests, determine what we ought or ought not to do. In an interesting discussion on divorce, in the journal *Religions,* agreement seemed impossible because the question of the wrongness or rightness of divorce turned on alleged sayings of Jesus, variously reported, and diverse theological interpretations of them. The Humanist prefers to discuss ethics in the light of our physiological and psychological needs in a given social setting. Ethics for him is not a matter of copy-book maxims or the soothing sound of "that sweet word Mesopotamia." Justice, truth, and righteousness may become sugary shibboleths—words of no more value as guides to conduct than the "Mesopotamia" of the vicar's sermon was to his old lady parishioner. Ethical thinking must be set in the context of all our thinking if it is to bear fruit. Puritanism, which is nourished by narrow introspection, creates the moral rebel; its overstress of a limited number of virtues tends to convert them into vices. Sentimentalism, which is often twin-brother to Puritanism, has the same effect.

Morality has been slowly built up by experimental methods, involving many a dismal failure; it is not a testament delivered to us from the blue. This great and ramifying tree has grown with man's growth and is soiled with his imperfections; it changes with the changing complex of his biological and social needs. There are no infallible moral judgments, and, however good we may feel in obeying our consciences, we are often led by them into grievous wrongs.

No Humanist can maintain that we need not trouble much about public issues, unless they closely affect our private lives. If he would be consistently moral he is bound to search seriously for solutions of political and economic problems, and he will further discover that, in its highest reaches, the ethical is merged in the aesthetic. We are apt to think of beauty as simply an adornment of life, which perhaps we cannot always afford. Beauty belongs to life in its fullness. It is only when regarded as intrinsically lovely that morality ceases to be a calculus of means to petty egoistic ends, and only when so regarded does science, the eternal quest of truth, attain its wings of flight into the expanding empyrean.

A. D. HOWELL SMITH

Puzzled People

THE *Ethical Union* sponsored this "study in popular attitudes to religion, ethics, progress and politics in a London Borough."* The London Borough was selected as a typical urban area and, within the limits inevitable to the inquiry, representative results were sought. The claims made are not pitched too high. The reader is offered, that is, a statement of "prevalent tendencies" rather than "results which are typical of the population as a whole." Mr. Blackham puts succinctly what that actually amounts to in the preface which he signs in the name of the *Ethical Union.* It is this. "The report reveals, at the level of opinion, a mental and moral chaos—the chaos of mass democracy." Mr. Blackham neatly draws, too, the lessons of this investigation. He is sceptical of the over-simple conclusion drawn by the writer of the report that because "people are looking for something to believe" they are raw and malleable material for exploitation by idealogues or any "resolute opportunists" who can establish new Leaderships, plural or singular. His scepticism on this vitally important conclusion is surely justified, one would think. The English are a pragmatic people. They never attained, or kept for long if they did temporarily attain, doctrinal solidarity. "Theology rules them," said Casaubon of the Puritan age, but the Anabaptists, Muggletonians and the rest were already ghostly memories in the Restoration gaieties of Charles II: Bentham and Cobden masterfully led us into individualistic fervours that issued in the gloomy doctrinal ecstasies of Herbert Spencer but the collectivist Fabians were already round the corner . . . There is no very obvious sign that we have changed. We are still pragmatic, good-tempered grumblers, little given to systematic thought or disciplined rigours of uniformity. May one not quite reasonably affirm that those who bid us shiver at the impending onset of a new Fascism here are, unconsciously one hopes, engaged in the favourite pastime among intellectuals of wishful thinking? No one suspects Mr. Tom Harrisson of a design to become our new Fuhrer, or his able staff of accessory ambitions, but an inquiry of this kind can easily be taken too seriously.

It is well to be blunt in this sort of speculation. What sort of questions *can* be put to people, untrained in abstract as in theological speculations, about God or god, immortality, morals . . . ? There is little solidarity in any one's mind on these great issues. The Papists have always recognized that; and received loyalty and

---

**Puzzled People.* Report prepared for the Ethical Union by MASS OBSERVATION. Gollancz, 7s. 6d.

discipline as reward. But those of us who know that nothing has ever been said about God, or about the purpose of life (if there is one), save by man are in a different category. We can splash about in the muddy puddles of our minds and drag up some sentiment or *cliché* or memory or fantasy . . . Only priests, whether old, new, or but new presbyters writ large, can make dogmatic statements—it is their obligation and interest so to do. This inquiry has ranged about in the twilight zones of people's mental and emotional attitudes. It has dug up what was there, inevitably, and what was there should have been expected. How could it be otherwise.

To this I would like to add a note of personal doubt. I am not surprised, or disconcerted, or alarmed at the discovery that people are puzzled. It has always been so and in these deeps will, I guess, always be so. I hope it will, in a sense. Unanimity on these issues would come near to tyranny, or seem to spring from subservience, or issue out of strait-waistcoat education. But the doubt springs from a feeling that the method of investigation is unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory for this sort of twilight zone of the mind, that is. I have the uneasy feeling in reading this book that the questions put, especially the subsidiary follow-up questions, have been prefaced by *nonne* or *num* and so have produced the expected answers. I have no desire whatever to impugn the good faith of the investigators. They have doubtless done their work with enthusiasm and good faith. I only suggest that it isn't a good field for their efforts. People can be led to say—and the leading can be unconscious—what is in the questioner's mind. I think this has happened.

All this does not say that *Puzzled People* is a trifling study of religious, ethical and political attitudes. It is not trifling, but it is not surprising. It does not offer much to the policy-maker upon which to build. It demonstrates, once again and very usefully, the field that is open to unscrupulous manipulations of that undefined entity 'public opinion': it is a field where charlatans well may cluster thick. And by implication, too, it shows that the biggest charlatan of the lot will be the one who endows his own ambitions with the term Leadership (capital L) whether he be general or politician, press-lord or parson. Such should always be suspect, from whatever quarter they come. And the interesting thing is that mass-confusion will inevitably lead to their ultimate defeat, however embarrassingly it may lead to or condition their temporary success.

The real meaning of this study, it seems to me, lies there. And the corollary of that is the paramount duty of extending the reign, and range, of reason. When people have matured sufficiently to know how to *choose*—and this applies in all the fields here studied

—they will have mastered the techniques of self-leadership. They will then agree about many things which matter in the organization of their common lives, including the futility of Great Men or Great Leaders, but they will still talk bewildering and puzzled nonsense about God, the Future Life, the Next World, the Purpose of Living. And why not? And thank goodness!

H. L. BEALES

Dr. Inge reflects, recalling the thoughts of other distinguished thinkers, upon two questions of the Christian faith which puzzle ordinary people.

Two Great Problems

THOSE who are interested in problems of belief should read, if it is still procurable, F. C. S. Schiller's book with this title, published by Hodder and Stoughton. It contains a questionnaire on human immortality, issued by the American Society for Psychical Research. Schiller was theoretically a pragmatist, who believed that since absolute truth is either non-existent or out of our reach, we may believe what suits us, at our own risk. Practically he was a very lucid thinker, not at all inclined to play tricks with his intelligence. The chapters on implicit beliefs, half-beliefs, dishonest beliefs, and make-believe, are worth reading.

The questionnaires show that, apart from the numerous people who never wish to cross from the world of facts to the world of values, from the seen to the unseen, from appearance to reality—put it how we will—and who in consequence are blind to the whole problem, there are two questions which quite reasonably exercise the minds of thoughtful persons. One is the future life, the other is the problem of evil.

Beliefs in human immortality depend on the most difficult of all philosophical problems, the status of time in reality. I do not think that any revelation has been or could be given us about what we sometimes call the next world, when "there shall be time no longer." We cannot think about such a state without using our familiar forms of time and place, the warp and woof or the canvas on which we draw our pictures of the world as it appears to our senses. There is no harm in doing this, so long as we recognise that these pictures of the invisible are and must be symbolic. Even Christ, when He took our nature upon Him, accepted human limitations, and the future is hidden from mankind. In His parables He used the current imagery of Paradise and Gehenna, which the Jews perhaps took from Persia, since in their earlier literature there is no future

life, but only a shadowy half-existence in Sheol, a place like Homer's Hades; and Sheol was not under the jurisdiction of Jehovah. Parables are not meant to be taken literally.

The only argument which Christ used, against the Sadduces, was "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him." St. Augustine sums this up beautifully. *Quod Deo non perit sibi perit;* "what does not perish for God does not perish for itself." For a Christian, belief in God is central, belief in immortality is consequential, peripheral.

"All that is at all lasts ever, past recall," says Robert Browning. This is the creed of many of the greatest thinkers. "Birthless and deathless and changeless the spirit abideth for ever; death cannot touch it at all, dead though the house of it seems," says the Indian Bhagavadgita. "Time is the moving image of eternity," says Plato. "Nothing that really is can ever perish," says Plotinus. *"Non est potentia ad non esse,"* says St. Thomas Aquinas. "We feel and know that we are eternal," says Spinoza. What *part* of our composite self is immortal is another question. Soul must become spirit, say the Platonists. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption," says St. Paul. I think we may safely follow these great thinkers; and for the comfort of mourners we may remember that God is Love, and that "Love is stronger than death."

Of course we meet with very muddled and confused thoughts about the future life. We remember Frederic Myers' churchwarden, who when he was asked what he really thought would become of him after death replied, "I suppose I shall go into everlasting bliss, but I wish you would not talk about such depressing subjects." Most of us, I think, are not afraid of being dead, but as the Frenchman said, *"Pour être mort malheureusement il faut mourir."* The Oxford philosopher Nettleship, who met death bravely in the Alps, was accustomed to say, "Death does not count." I do not think it does.

The other terrible puzzle is the problem of evil. St. Augustine states it with admirable frankness, "Either God cannot abolish evil or He will not. If He will not He is not good; if He cannot He is not omnipotent." This dilemma has never been answered, and never can be. All kinds of explanations have been offered, and none is satisfactory. "There must be an explanation," said Dr. Johnson with his robust common sense, "but we do not know what it is." In the comfortable age which has now passed away the Devil shammed being dead. Evolution was supposed to have finished him. Now he says with a chuckle, "I will show them that I have been evolving too." Christianity teaches that there are evil spirits,

that "the whole world liveth in the wicked one." The moralist, as moralist, must be half a Manichean. We are the soldiers of Christ, matched with a formidable enemy. Christianity is a call to heroism.

It is not the kind of world which we should have made if we had been consulted. Alfonso the Wise of Spain said that he could have suggested many improvements. A loud clap of thunder prevented him from putting his views on record.

The world as we know it is an arena. Everywhere, said Heracleitus, there is a harmony of opposite tensions, as in a bow or a lyre. "In yes and no all things consist," said Jacob Böhme. Blake in a fine poem wrote: "Joy and woe are woven fine, a clothing for the soul divine. Man is made for joy and woe. It is best it should be so; and when this we rightly know, safely through the world we go." "We see not yet all things put under God," says St. Paul. Such is our world, and we must accept it. But we may "ascend in heart and mind" to the spiritual world, which is our heart's true home. In that world good is victorious.

W. R. INGE

BOOK REVIEWS

The Stars and the Mind. By Martin Davidson, D.Sc., F.R.A.S. Watts & Co., 1947, 10s. 6d.

This extremely interesting history has been added by Dr. Davidson to his previous works on astronomy and on religion.

It traces the development of astronomy from the early observations of the Chinese and the Chaldeans to the astrophysics and celestial dynamics of the present day. The vicissitudes of the science in coming up against primitive preconceptions are adequately dealt with, and in the closing chapters the author describes the impact of astronomy on the human mind. Here, however, is not a psychological study, but a description of the difficult position in which Christianity finds itself to-day when expounding scriptures which are scientifically inaccurate.

Dr. Davidson points out that the Greeks were the first to speculate and enquire into the reasons for phenomena, and it was among the Greeks that the first collisions occurred between scientists and the other philosophers. The Chinese had made careful measurements and beautiful instruments, but they had been interested in art for art's sake and in its practical applications. The records of their observations afford information on eclipses and comets useful to the modern astronomer, but they did not formulate scientific theories to account for the rhythm of events. The Chaldeans found astronomy useful in compiling the calendars which were used for

regulating their agriculture, and they carried the consultation of astronomers to the point where it was swamped by astrology which became an instrument in the hands of the priests. In corn-growing Egypt, too, the priests used astronomy to enhance their power. The Hebrews (being herdsmen) did not study astronomy as a science, but they had definite ideas of how Jehovah arranged his stage properties that housed the upper waters and the lower waters, which are shown in a fascinating diagram illustrating a chapter full of biblical quotations.

The illustrations in this book are well chosen and illuminating. A lazy reader would do well to look first at all the pictures, to whet his appetite before partaking of fare that requires unhurried mastication. The diagrams in the chapter on Greek astronomy show concentric crystal spheres enveloping the earth and air. The inner ones contain the moon, sun and planets, and the outermost is studded with the fixed stars and was supposed to rotate daily about an axis passing through the pole star. The conviction that the firmament really was firm and solid prevailed among the ancient philosophers, including Aristotle and Pythagoras, the latter even going so far as to invent "the Music of the Spheres" arising from the rotation of these vast crystal globes.

After a time the celestial spheres came to be regarded merely as regions in space, and references to them occur in works on astronomy up to the time of Newton; these have to be read carefully to avoid confusion with the spheres which are the sun and planets.

The crystalline firmament that carried the stars was the stumbling block in the path of astronomical theory, and the chapters covering the period from Aristarchus (c.300 B.C.) to Newton show that it was kept firmly in place by orthodox religion. Astronomers therefore confined their activities to compiling almanacks for navigation as well as for calendars. (Even the nautical almanacks of to-day can be used without any knowledge of controversial astronomical theory.) During the Dark Ages when savage hordes over-ran Europe, and in the Middle Ages, the Arabs and Moors carried the torch of learning for astronomy and mathematics, using spherical trigonometry for computing the apparent motions in the heavens.

It was Copernicus who liberated the astronomer's mind from the prison of the crystalline firmament when he revived the idea, first postulated by Aristarchus, that a rotating earth revolves round the sun in an infinite universe. He first produced an account of his system in 1517, and his views met with the usual opposition, which in this case originated with the laity and the Lutherans before it

resulted in his publications being placed on the Papal Index and in his followers, notably Bruno and Galileo, becoming victims of the Inquisition. And it was not until more than a century later that Newton, under the enlightened protection of Charles II in England, was able to carry on unmolested from where Copernicus left off. Kepler in Germany, during the early 17th century, had been in favour of the Copernican system, but his mind was still entangled in spheres and even in their music, and he was harried on account of his Protestantism. Since the time of Newton, developments in astronomy have been unfettered by religious persecution.

In accepting the Copernican system, man had not only mentally stepped off the earth into an infinitive universe of millions of suns; he had removed the floor of heaven and abolished it from space. One regrets that Dr. Davidson made such slight reference to Einstein, whose theories might be instrumental in removing another material attribute of heaven, namely, the time boundary, which is supposed to separate it from living men.

In his closing chapters, Dr. Davidson touches on modern theories of matter, which have exploded the mechanistic conceptions of the 19th century Rationalists, and mentions interpretations of spectroscopic observations which suggest that the stars are receding. He deals with the effect of these modern atomic theories and the idea of an expanding universe on the minds of Platonic mathematicians like Jeans and Eddington, and on those who follow Whittaker in favouring dualism. He also quotes de Sitter on the danger of extrapolation—an apprehension of which could resolve the whole controversy between religion and science.

The concluding chapter is a summary of the book, and includes a note of encouragement in pointing out that, in spite of the last war and the distrustful atmosphere which has followed it, astronomers of all nationalities are still allowed to exchange views.

SYBIL MATHEWS

Head and Hand in Ancient Greece. By Benjamin Farrington. Watts, pp. x, 119; 2s. 6d.

All history is contemporary history, revealing the mind of the present in its responsiveness to the past. The past is a mirror of the present, a distorting mirror in which exaggerated features reveal essential character. The historian learns about the past from the present and about the present from the past, and history is a continuous fertilization of experience by each generation for its own needs. The scholar (far from being a dryasdust absent-minded person living out of his time, assimilated to the faded existence of a world surviving only in libraries) is peculiarly a man of his time,

sensitive to present influences, movements, alternatives, and using them as clues to his reading of the past. It is the man on the stage whose imagination re-enacts the past. The English scholar writes Greek history neither as an early Greek nor as an Olympian; if he does not write it as a Gladstonian Liberal or a Marxist or from some such contemporary standpoint, he writes it as a child. We see the past from the standpoint of the present necessarily, as we see the world from the standpoint of a human being: it is the implications of this truism which are not so obvious and have to be seriously considered and discussed. Intelligent acceptance of this approach to the past by way of the present, with critical awareness of contemporary cultural assumptions, gives the historian an independent line in his research; his focus of attention picks up and illuminates things in which his predecessors had little interest, and together in the light which shows them up they make a different view of the familiar scene. What is thus lighted up was always there, may individually at different times have been picked out and held in view by a spotlight, but the total scene as it stands in the light now thrown upon it is a modern composition.

Professor Farrington in the four essays collected and reprinted in this book takes us in his own attractively modest way to look again at the origin of Greek science and philosophy and at Stoicism and Epicureanism as historical movements. In the first essay he shows, mainly by an analysis of language, how the industrial arts helped the Greeks to think about the processes of nature and to become scientists and philosophers. Industrial techniques furnished their instruments of thought, and so long as they followed this clue they were successful in threading the maze, and approached experimental technique and true scientific method. But when the success of manual arts created prosperity and they learned to despise them, because their minds turned to the cultivation of the soul and the body and of the fine arts, they turned from the direction which led by the empirical approach to experimental science. Even in the field of moral philosophy on which Socrates concentrated attention, it is a commonplace of scholarship to remark on the characteristic use which is made of the practical technique as an instrument of philosophic thought: virtue can be taught, ethics is a higher gymnastic, the moral philosopher is a doctor, education is a complete medicine, music is a prescription. But Plato and Aristotle, seeking a rational not merely an operational account of man and nature, proceed to a dialectical development of their assumptions about man, society, and nature; and Aristotle, looking back on the history of Greek science, misunderstands what has happened so far as to suppose that inquiry into the nature of things began after the arts of life had established leisure, an independence which, accord-

ing to Professor Farrington's argument, began not science but alienation from the conditions which made science possible. The argument is followed up in the second essay by taking the special case of medicine which did continue to develop as a science because it was maintained in social respect as a practical art, an art which included the constant practice of such techniques as massage and gymnastics, dispensing and cooking, surgery and osteopathy. Having their roots deep in this practical ground the great schools of medicine held their majestic empiricism unshaken by the winds of doctrine which blew so strongly from the schools of abstract philosophy. On the other hand, concentration upon the leisured citizen with nothing to do but consider his own well-being, leaving to slaves the doctoring of workers, confined medicine to a narrow scope and by excluding its social aspect checked its advance.

In the third essay Professor Farrington refers Stoic doctrine to its astrological ground and background in order to bring out its universalist character and its revolutionary rôle in the early phase. He connects the social aspiration of the doctrine with the slave revolts, which he interprets as conscious bids for social regeneration. In the last essay he studies Epicureanism during the later phase when Stoicism, emasculated, as a doctrine of duty and resignation, had become the creed of upper class Romans. It was recognized as politically expedient to cultivate the superstitious fears of the masses and therefore to maintain and enforce official pagan cults. In this Stoicism acquiesced as a public duty. But it was the mission of Epicureanism to free men's minds from the bondage of superstitious fear and to offer a pure and rational religion; and Epicureanism was popular. Hence the hatred and hostility of Cicero, and his disingenuous treatment of it, characteristic of his class.

Better than books one could name more imposing in size and pretentious in treatment, these two pairs of essays take us to the source of our culture and show us the faltering, the breaks, the reverses, the jumps in the scattered course of progress. Looking with our own modern eyes we see what will never be seen by those who are content to see with the eyes of Aristotle and of Cicero; and we gain firmer possession of the early phases of the humanist tradition, and keener appreciation of the meaning of what is now going on, the influences, the movements, the alternatives of our time. Professor Farrington does not claim originality for his studies and carefully acknowledges his debt to the authorities he follows; but he deserves credit for the skilful weaving of his argument and the scholarly restraint which respects the limits of his conclusions and presents them not as a challenge but as a contribution. Those who value the humanist tradition and have found that penetration into

the past can inspire and guide the present will return more than once to follow clues suggested in these essays. We are very glad that they are here offered to a wider public.

H.J.B.

Trade Unions in the New Era. By Ben Roberts, 43 pp. International Publishing Company, 1s. 6d.

Trade Unions in a Labour Britain. By J. B. Jeffreys, Fabian Publications, Ltd., and Victor Gollancz, 6d.

Works Councils and Committees. Pp. 40. Industrial Welfare Society, 2s.

The Fabian pamphlet is a brief outline of the main problems engaging the attention of trade unionists to-day and is one of a series for use in Discussion Groups. Increasing production, a National Wages Policy, and trade union structure are amongst the subjects covered. Ben Roberts in his booklet deals with some of the same problems in more detail. He stresses the necessity for maintaining the independence of the unions, and while he suggests that there are many things, particularly in the field of aiding production, to be learnt from both Russian and American union movements, they must not become official or semi-official agencies of the government as in Russia or divorced from politics to the extent of the American unions.

The error that many make who advocate the integration of the union machine with state organs is in overlooking the functional differences of the two bodies. The state has more demands made upon it than it can fulfil, demands for higher wages for workers and higher salaries for officials, money for capital investment in industry, money for the armed services, money for social services, etc., etc., and there is nothing more sure than savings will be made at the expense of the worker if he has not an independent organisation fighting for his interest, no matter what the government may be called, capitalist, labour, or communist. Economic power derives from political power.

Roberts points out, too, that there will always be need of individual attention in checking faulty administration, however well the public administration may be organised.

The principle of independence must be retained, for the individual worker to decide whether or not to become a unionist; and the author is consistent to the point of justifying the right to form breakaway unions, well knowing as a practical union worker what difficulties these bodies invariably make. The maintenance of this right safeguards the unionist from what might otherwise be the

abuses of a trade union bureaucracy with a monopoly right to organise within a given field.

On the question of the National Wages Policy, Roberts is far too wary to join the uncritical mob who demand a forthright policy in this field. Those who do so would couple their demand with one for the setting up of a totalitarian state if they understood the implications. An example of national machinery not functioning successfully is the case of the transport industry with its unofficial strikes. One cannot divorce wage negotiations abruptly from market considerations.

Roberts suggests an extension of the system of arbitration but realises that tribunals function normally by the preservation of the status quo between relative wage levels. His remedy for this is in the raising of the status of the tribunal and the making of arbitration a full-time job with the task of relating decisions against the whole background of industry and of national needs as defined by the government of the day.

The book on Works Councils is a reprint of an earlier edition. These bodies serve as the most direct way of indicating a sense of status to the worker, gaining his active co-operation in production problems, and providing a school for both management and workers alike in the functioning of democratic machinery. The running of a successful Council requires acumen and knowledge of the problems involved. This book provides the knowledge.

M. L. BURNET

Artificial Human Insemination. pp. 81. Heinemann, 3s. 6d.

Intelligence and Fertility. By Sir Cyril Burt. pp. 43. The Eugenics Society and Hamish Hamilton, 2s.

Artificial Human Insemination is the report of a conference of medical men and women, ministers of religion, and others held under the auspices of the Public Morality Council. While there is something to be said for the mere fact that there has been a discussion on this subject at all, it is disappointing to find the limited scope and application that formed the basis of discussion, namely, the procuring of children for childless married couples, with some fleeting consideration for the needs of spinsters and widows. It is one thing to view the matter in the light of improving the quality of human life and quite another to see it as a means of securing satisfaction for individuals, unfortunate as the plight of the woman with an impotent or sterile spouse may be. The use of the tech-

nique to improve the human race is ruled out, only animals apparently being considered worthy of improvement.

There was unanimous approval amongst those participating, including a Roman Catholic priest, of artificial insemination with the use of the husband's sperm, but much discussion took place on what appears a minor point, whether or not this could be legitimately obtained by masturbation.

A.I., or A.H.I., as it is termed with reference to its use with man, is practised to a certain degree in this country outside the husband and wife relationship and to a far greater extent in America. Mary Barton, one of the doctors taking part in the conference, described the usual practice where a semen donor is used, the matter remaining a secret between husband, wife, and physician, the donor being kept unaware of the destiny of his seed. Other speakers in the conference criticised the practice on the grounds of its secrecy and deception involved, and (although some allowance may have to be made for pioneers working in difficult circumstances) rightly so, for it is surely wrong in principle to register the birth of a child with false information and subsequently to keep the child ignorant of his parentage. It seems an essential need that if A.H.I. is to be practised with the use of donors that it be carried out under the supervision of a national institution, and that property laws and registration regulations be adjusted to meet the new situation.

The discussion was turned to the consideration of wider aspects, all too briefly albeit, by the contribution of Professor E. O. James who dealt with sociological aspects. The closed character of the family unit is essential, he maintained, if it is to retain its stability. This seems to be the crux of the question in its wider aspects, for, Plato and his theories of the communal rearing of children notwithstanding, it appears to be desirable to retain the family unit in order to harness the male part of the population in the economic support of and personal service to the child population. Normally, the woman's consort should accept the position of parent at law of her children. It is legitimate to query the opinion of James on the closed principle. The psychologist, J. C. Flugel, has queried the existence of an instinct for fatherhood. It is certainly true of animal life generally that there is no conscious realisation of the male role as a sire, and that human fathers frequently have no desire for children there can be no doubt, the tender feeling for them coming after birth in much the same way as the young of animals excite tender emotions in the human breast. What might be a help to the over-personalised male would be the use of a complete A.I. technique with fertilised ova, the status of the male and female being by this means put upon an equality.

A committee appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury is at present investigating the problem of Artificial Insemination. An investigation of this character would better be undertaken under the aegis of a body such as the Ethical Union, since it is one of extreme difficulty requiring the combined qualifications of a strong interest in ethics, some understanding of long term human history, and an awareness of sociological aspects. Churches, especially the more orthodox ones, are prevented from giving unprejudiced consideration to questions of such a character because their creeds are related to the social needs of an early historical situation.

In *Intelligence and Fertility*, Sir Cyril Burt supplies evidence which appears to show a negative correlation between intelligence and fertility. Burt interprets figures, taken largely from London County Council school records, as showing that there has been a fall in the Intelligence Quotient equivalent to 2.0 in a generation. He does not claim however that there is more than a prima facie case for further investigation, as there are so many difficulties that must be contended with in estimates of this nature. One that springs to the non-expert mind is the movement of the population from the central areas of London to the suburbs outside the county boundary. May it not be that it is the better-off parents with higher average I.Q. that move out to the new suburbs, since a determining factor in the undertaking of this adventure hitherto has been the ability to purchase a dwelling and to afford the fares for added travel to work? Should it be definitely established that there is a falling in I.Q., may it not be caused by the time lag in the spread of the use of birth control technique from the professional and technical classes down through the skilled classes to the labouring classes? Burt does not describe remedies for the problem, else one could have added the widespread use of Artificial Insemination to the list.

A minor factor in causing a decline in average intelligence may be due to the more healthy conditions prevailing, in general, and to the public health and maternity and child welfare services in particular (leading to a higher survival rate for children of the classes with lower average I.Q.). Christian ideology, determined by the need for many unskilled hands in all civilisations from the agricultural to the present urban system, appears to favour the survival of the weak, though up to the present its scanty translation into action has not made for revolutionary changes in the population content. There may well be need in the future to revise Christian ideals and to cultivate a more selective attitude to procreation and survival. Meanwhile with many other problems that appear so pressing and disturbing, many people will find their withers unwrung even with

the confirmation of the falling I.Q., though there is certainly a case for a thorough investigation to be undertaken when more stable conditions can provide reliable data on the subject.

M. L. BURNET

THE HOWARD JOURNAL. The Howard League for Penal Reform; pp. 80; 1s.

The journal of the Howard League is packed with material of the greatest interest and use to those who are in any way concerned with the prevention and treatment of crime and juvenile delinquency, that is to say every responsible member of the public. The Howard League is a voluntary association leading advanced opinion in this field. It is not one of the many associations of cranks and near-cranks: it has standing and influence, is well supported, knowledgeable, and officially trusted and used. There is perhaps no better contemporary instance of the public spirited effective association exemplifying the voluntary principle which has played so useful and honourable a part in the national life.

The present issue of the journal contains summaries of the Prison Commissioners' Report, 1939-44, the Report of the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis, the Report of the Home Office Committee on Approved Schools and Remand Homes, the Report of the Curtis Committee on Child Care, and a summary of Annual Reports and dispatches on prisons in the Colonies. Lt.-Col. Penton describes the technique of personnel selection used in the army and its application to deserters. Mr. Alan Paton, Principal of Diepkloof Reformatory, Johannesburg, gives his impressions of penal methods and results gathered in a recent visit to Sweden and to Britain: he notes the conspicuous lack of tension in the Swedish institutions, the entirely normal appearance of the prisoners and their spontaneous busy concern with their occupations; and he argues that this result and the treatment which produces it is only possible where crime is not a serious social problem. "To put it very baldly, it appears that advanced theories of penal treatment gain acceptance in those countries where acceptance matters least. The penal world is in the position of a man who has found a new method for taming lions, but does not dare to try it on wild ones." At any rate, the results where it is tried confirm the confidence of reformers in the validity of their principles. The article on the Prison Commissioners' Report comments on the outstanding output of prisoners working on war production, and asks whether there will be a "drift back to the old régime where by no stretch of the imagination could the work be described as a genuine part of the training. But work

takes up so great a part of the prisoner's day that unless it brings a positive good in its train, prison life can never provide a real training, and with the best will in the world the aims of the Prison Commissioners will be doomed to failure." Dr. Hermann Mannheim's *Criminal Justice and Social Reconstruction* is the first of the books reviewed, and in the editorial columns he is congratulated on his appointment as Reader in Criminology at the London School of Economics, which prompts the Editor to ask, "When will Oxford and other universities follow London's example in providing for both teaching and research in this important branch of humane studies?"

H.J.B.

The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays. By W. K. Clifford, pp. 128. Watts & Co., 2s. 6d.

In the seventy-year-old essay, *The Ethics of Belief,* Clifford defined the duties and obligations of the individual towards truth and truth finding in a manner that has not been improved upon since. Clifford held that a man must not merely recognise truth when confronted with it, but that he should take steps to acquire the best evidence available before forming a belief. This is still the basis of the morality of the ethicist and rationalist.

Unfortunately a large number of people do not think fundamentally upon any issue at all, religion included, and a proportion of those who do so, decide to exercise the option of believing in what they want to believe in. That people will find that owing to the improved quality of the life led they do not still require the dream phantasies of orthodox religions is the hope for the future, rather than that a larger proportion of people will feel the compulsion to think honestly. The hankering for truth is a religious impulse and not a universal one.

M. L. BURNET.

Correspondence on the Symposium in the previous issue.

RELIGION AND THE CHILD

I was especially interested in the symposium on the religious upbringing of children without theology, which was rightly given so much space in your April issue, the more so, since in an article entitled "Rationalism and the Child," which was published in *The Literary Guide* for November last, I discussed this very issue.

I found considerable stimulus in the discussion, but I feel that one point is still largely disregarded. That point is: those of us who would describe ourselves as Humanists or Rationalists naturally do not wish our children to be indoctrinated with religious beliefs which we ourselves hold to be untrue. Nor, on the other hand, do we wish to involve our children in religious conflicts. Yet, as soon as children go to school (unless they are fortunate enough to go to one of the "modern schools" like Dartington Hall) they will meet others who have been given an old-fashioned religious outlook. Now, I have never felt that the method of withdrawing a child from the period of religious instruction is altogether a satisfactory one. It will tend to give the child a feeling of isolation and dissatisfaction. But even on this point, there is no certainty. As I suggested in my *Literary Guide* article, it would be interesting and valuable to have the advice of some psychologist of Humanist leanings on this point. But if the child is allowed to take part in religious observances at school, will this give him a leaning in favour of religion, with a consequent feeling that his parents have missed something out of his early training? Mr. Child, in his contribution to your symposium, says that he does not consider that any sort of genuine religious knowledge can be given before the age of adolescence; but with the clergy now carrying on a raging campaign, with the apparent acquiescence of all political parties, for more religion in schools, what chance is there of putting this policy into effect?

I speak with some feeling in this matter, as I have a small son now aged three. He has had no religious instruction; but I am wondering what will happen when he is five, and goes to a school where religion will be taught.

24th April, 1947. JOHN ROWLAND

Nobody yet knows how far the difficulty of Humanist parents in a country officially Christian will be intensified by the working of the religious clauses of the Education Act. No doubt local practice will vary. Certainly it is for such parents to agitate for a revision of religious policy in education; and the *Secular Education League* exists to help them. Meanwhile, sensible handling of the question in the home should in normal circumstances avoid serious trouble. In the symposium, Mrs. Flemming dealt with this part of the problem.—H.J.B.

Printed in England by The Blackfriars Press, Ltd., Smith-Dorrien Ros
Leicester, and published for The Ethical Union Inc. by C. A. Wa
and Co., Ltd., 5 and 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.